

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
MFA FINAL VISUAL PRESENTATION

by

SHELLEY JOAN ROTHENBURGER

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF FINE ARTS

IN

PAINTING

DEPARTMENT OF ART AND DESIGN

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Final Visual Presentation

submitted by SHELLEY JOAN ROTHENBURGER in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Art.

The University of Alberta

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DEPARTMENT OF ART AND DESIGN

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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

I hereby release the following works for incorporation into the University Collections,
University of Alberta, as part of the Master of Fine Arts Thesis Collection:

TITLE	DATE	MEDIUM	SIZE
Performing a Secretion	1999	Acrylic, oil, photocopy on paper	63" x 49"

Insurance Value: \$800.00

“... animals are always the observed. The fact that they can observe us has lost all significance. They are the objects of our ever-extending knowledge. What we know about them is an index of our power and thus an index of what separates us from them. The more we know, the further away they are.” - John Berger, “Why Look at Animals” in About Looking

My works are based on a critique of man's desire to be separate from animals and his need to dominate them. I've focused on our capacity for knowledge and the pursuit of it, as the definitive force that guarantees our isolation as a species.

Within the scientific environment of the zoology museum, the systematic collection and preservation of animal specimens became my reserve for subject matter. It displayed first-hand evidence of our need to understand, control and manage nature. The process was initiated by my photographic documentation of species in various reduced states of dissection, decomposition, preservation and storage. The photographs were xeroxed and enlarged, fragmented and collaged onto recycled painted surfaces and worked again with paint to resolution. I began to see the formal logic of the scientific environment as something to disrupt by tampering with perspective, using elevated vantage points, distorting space and gravitation and implying the re-activation of dead specimens. The scientific environment itself became the object of my scrutiny and deconstruction.

Photography brought a “truth” advantage to my images. Capturing these animals on film became a significant factor in re-enforcing their objectification. The mechanical process of photography produced an image of death. What had been a free roaming being was now reduced to a black and white still object for human observation. These animals have become signifiers of the unnatural. They are no more animal than the objects in their proximity. Jars, boxes, saws, tables, metal shelves and consumer packaging become signifiers of human management, authority and the consumption of nature.

Painted images and gestural mark-making addressed my personal response to the photo image. I focused on generating contradictions. To counter the mechanical, I used materiality, raw expression, sensuality and emotion, to further intensify the toner-black “deadness” and isolation of the animal image. I wanted to bring two opposing mediums together, yet keep their distinctness intact - one playing off against the other.

The selected excerpts of text come from various individuals who “know” about wild animals based on their understanding and experience of the natural environment. Rather than focus on science exclusively, I included the “nature wisdom” of those who were speaking with the most conviction about animals. They included hunters, anglers, wildlife artists, animal rights activists and forest conservationists. I became interested in their opposing opinions and their use of language as a driving force to establish themselves as dominant, knowing and thereby separate from nature. Yet, I also perceived an undertone of disquiet in their comments. A desire to connect to the natural world. This desire can be seen as a sign-post of insecurity and fear at becoming so divorced from it.

As Viktor E. Frankl states, in Michael W. Fox's, Returning to Eden, “More than such faculties as the power of speech, conceptual thinking, or walking erect, the factor of doubting the significance of his own existence is what sets man apart from animals.” Man has made his place at the top. He is alone there and never feels right about being there.

Shelley Rothenburger

FISH OUT OF WATER

Public Viewing

March 14 - April 2, 2000

Opening Reception

Thursday, March 16, 2000
6:30 pm - 10:00 pm

Gallery Hours

Tuesday to Friday
10:00 am - 5:00 pm
Sunday
2:00 to 5:00 pm
Closed Monday, Saturday
and statutory holidays

1 -1 Fine Arts Building
University of Alberta
112 Street and 89 Avenue
Edmonton AB Canada
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SHELLEY ROTHENBURGER

This exhibition is the final visual presentation for the degree of
Master of Fine Arts in Painting



Shelley Rothenburger



Fish Out of Water

March 14 - April 2, 2000

MFA EXHIBITION

Opening Reception: Thursday, March 16, 6:30 -10 pm

Fine Arts Building Gallery
1-1 Fab, University of Alberta
112 Street - 89 Avenue

Tues - Fri: 10-5
Sun: 2-5
Closed Sat & Mon

This Exhibition is the final visual presentation
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LIST OF SOURCES CITED FOR TEXT

1. Glen Loates, Glen Loates, A Brush with Life, with a Foreword by Glen Warner (Harry N. Abrams Inc., New York, 1979),14.
2. Ibid.,154.
3. Ibid.
4. Robert Bateman, The Art of Robert Bateman, (Viking Press, New York, 1980),96.
5. Ibid.,59.
6. Landford Monroe, "Landford Monroe", From the Wild: Portfolio's of North America's Finest Wildlife Artists, with an Introduction by Christopher Hume and Edited by David M. Lank (Summerhill Press, Toronto, 1986),65.
7. Stanley Meltzoff, "Stanley Meltzoff", From the Wild,61.
8. Ron Parker, "Ron Parker", From the Wild,71.
9. Robert William Hegner, An Introduction to Zoology, (The Macmillan Company, New York, 1910),16.
10. Ibid.,306.
11. Rosalie Blanche Jermaine Lulham, An Introduction to Zoology through Nature Study, (Macmillan and Company Ltd., London, 1923),10.
12. Jake McDonald, "Search for the Big One", Outdoor Canada, 27 October 1999,32.
13. Ibid.
14. Don Sullivan, Director of Manitoba's Future Forest Alliance, quoted in Andrew Nikiforuk, "Assess This",16.
15. Ken Bailey, "Whitetail Fever",23.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.,24.
18. Ibid.
19. Roy Berkenbosch, "The Traveling Sportsman", The Outdoor Edge, 8 July/August 1998,52.
20. Andrey Linzey, "No Holiday", The Animals Agenda, November/December 1999,21.
21. Laura A. Morette, "Condition of the Heart",13.

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SLIDE LIST

1. Cull the Wild Dogs, 1999, acrylic, oil and photocopy on paper, 78in.X 58in.
2. Performing a Secretion, 1999, acrylic, oil and photocopy on paper, 63in.X 49in.
3. When It Blows Its Stack, 1999, acrylic, oil and photocopy on paper, 64in X 50in
4. Capturing The Essence of Wildlife, 1999, acrylic, oil and photocopy on paper, 64in.X 44in.
5. The Bug Room, 1999, acrylic, oil and photocopy on paper, 77in X 52in
6. Diorama, 1999, acrylic, oil, and photocopy on paper, 54in.X 43in.
7. Quality Field Cutlery, 1999, acrylic, oil and photocopy on paper, 43in.X 67in.
8. Wolf Pack In Moonlight, 1999, acrylic, oil and photocopy on paper, 66in.X 36in.
9. Good To The Last Three, 1999, acrylic, oil and photocopy on paper, 54in X 69in.
10. Good To The Last Three, part two of diptych
11. One Month From Term, 1999, acrylic, oil and photocopy on paper, 34in.X 55in.
12. Chocolate Coated Reason, 1999, acrylic, oil and photocopy on paper, 32.inX 57.in
13. Nature Guides, 1999, acrylic, oil and photocopy on paper, 49in.X 26in.
14. Tweezer, 1999, acrylic and photocopy on paper, 58in.X 25in.
15. Grade A, 1999, acrylic, oil and photocopy on paper, 26in.X 57in.
16. Alcoholic Mammals Reference, acrylic and photocopy on paper, 38in.X 46in.
17. Sky Lords, 1999, acrylic, oil and photocopy on paper, 60in.X 29in.
18. Instant and Rich, 1999, acrylic, oil and photocopy on paper, 43in.X 18in.
19. Hydro Power, 1999, acrylic, oil and photocopy on paper, 45in.X 19in.
20. Turn Pike, 1999, acrylic, oil and photocopy on paper, 53in.X 21in.
21. Alcoholic Birds Teaching, 1999, acrylic, oil and photocopy on paper, 38in.X 46in.
22. Alcoholic Birds Teaching, part two of diptych
23. Frozen Hare Series, 1999, acrylic, oil and photocopy on wood, 43in.X 11in.
24. Heavy Weights, 1999, acrylic, oil and photocopy on paper, 22in.X 73in.
25. Frozen Hare Series, 1999, acrylic, oil and photocopy on wood, 14in.X 28in
26. Frozen Hare Series, 1999, acrylic and photocopy on paper, 15in.X 11in.
27. Position of Rest, 1999, acrylic, oil and photocopy on paper, 17in X 41in.
28. Position of Rest, part two of diptych
29. Fully Retractable, 1999, acrylic, oil and photocopy on paper, 20in.X 18in.
30. We Have To Confirm, 1999, acrylic, oil and photocopy on paper, 22in.X 18in.
31. Summit, 1999, acrylic and photocopy on foam board, 22in.X 23in.

Text

32. L) Glen Loates, Glen Loates, A Brush with Life, with a Foreword by Glen Warner (Harry N. Abrams Inc., New York, 1979),154.
R) Ken Bailey, "Whitetail Fever", Outdoor Canada, 27 October 1999,23.
33. L) Don Sullivan, Director of Manitoba's Future Forest Alliance, quoted in Andrew Nikiforuk, "Assess This",16.
R) Jake McDonald, "Search for the Big One",32.
34. L) Glen Loates, Glen Loates, A Brush with Life,154.
R) Ken Bailey, "Whitetail Fever", Outdoor Canada,24.
35. L) Laura A. Morette, "Condition of the Heart", The Animals Agenda, November/ December1999,13.
R) Robert Bateman, The Art of Robert Bateman, (Viking Press, New York, 1980),96.

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